

FASTING SIX DAYS OF SHAWWAL

Fasting six days of Shawwal after the obligatory fast of Ramadan is Sunnah Mustahabb, not wajib.

It is recommended for the Muslim to fast six days of Shawwal, and in this there is great virtue and an immense reward.

Narrated by Abu Ayyub (رضي الله عنه) that,

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“WHOEVER FASTS RAMADAN AND FOLLOWS IT WITH SIX DAYS OF SHAWWAL, IT WILL BE AS IF HE FASTED FOR A LIFETIME”

(Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i & Ibn Majah)

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“ALLAH HAS MADE FOR EACH HASANAH TEN LIKE IT, SO A MONTH IS LIKE FASTING TEN MONTHS, AND FASTING SIX DAYS COMPLETES THE YEAR.”

(An Nasa'i, Ibn Majah & Saheeh Al Targheeb Wal Tarheeb, Vol 1, Page 421)

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (رحيم الله) & Emam Shafi'i (رحيم الله) said:

“Fasting six days of Shawwal after fasting Ramadan makes it as if one has fasted for an entire year of obligatory fasts, because the multiplication of the reward applies even to Nawafil fasts, because each hasanah brings the reward of ten like it.”

Another of the important benefits of fasting six days of Shawwal is that it makes up for any shortfall in a person's obligatory Ramadan fasts, because no one is free of shortcomings or sins that have a negative effect on his fasting.

On the Day of Resurrection, some of his Nawafil deeds will be taken to make up the shortcomings in his obligatory deeds.

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“THE FIRST THING FOR WHICH PEOPLE WILL BE BROUGHT TO ACCOUNT ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION WILL BE THEIR SALAH (PRAYER). OUR LORD, MAY HE BE GLORIFIED AND EXALTED, WILL SAY TO HIS ANGELS – ALTHOUGH HE KNOWS BEST –

‘LOOK AT THE SALAH OF MY SLAVE, WHETHER IT IS COMPLETE OR INCOMPLETE.’ IF IT IS PERFECT, IT WILL BE RECORDED AS PERFECT, AND IF SOMETHING IS LACKING, HE WILL SAY, ‘LOOK AND SEE WHETHER MY SLAVE DID ANY VOLUNTARY (NAWAFIL) PRAYERS.’ IF HE DID SOME VOLUNTARY PRAYERS, [ALLAH] WILL SAY, COMPLETE THE OBLIGATORY ACTIONS OF MY SLAVE FROM HIS VOLUNTARY ACTIONS.’

THEN ALL HIS ACTIONS WILL BE DEALT WITH IN A SIMILAR MANNER.”
(Abu Dawud)

DO THE SIX DAYS OF SHAWWAAL HAVE TO BE FASTED CONSECUTIVELY?

It is not a necessary condition that they should be fasted consecutively. If you fast them separately or consecutively, it is ok. The sooner you do them, the better.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“...SO, STRIVE AS IN A RACE IN GOOD DEEDS...”
(Surah Al Ma'idah 5:48)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“AND MARCH FORTH IN THE WAY (WHICH LEADS TO) FORGIVENESS FROM YOUR LORD,”
(Surah Ale Imran 3:133)

You may hasten to fast these six days or you may delay it until the middle or end of the month.

Imam Nawawi (رحيم الله) said:

It is mustahabb to fast six days consecutively at the beginning of Shawwal, but if one separates them or delays them until after Shawwal, this is permissible, because he will still be following the general guidelines of the hadeeth.
(Al Majmoo Sharh Al Muhadhdhab)

SHOULD A WOMAN START WITH MAKING UP MISSED FASTS FROM RAMADAAN OR WITH THE SIX DAYS OF SHAWWAAL?

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“WHOEVER FASTS RAMADAN THEN FOLLOWS IT WITH SIX DAYS OF SHAWWAL, IT WILL BE AS IF HE FASTED FOR A LIFETIME”
(Saheeh Muslim 1984)

If woman wants to earn the reward mentioned in the hadeeth of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), then she should complete her Ramadan fasts first, then follow it with six days of Shawwal and she will gain the reward mentioned in it.